

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **RONNIE MABRA AND CO-COUNSEL OBTAIN HISTORIC \$32.5 MILLION PRE-TRIAL WRONGFUL DEATH SETTLEMENT FOLLOWING TRACTOR-TRAILER WRECK**

**ATLANTA, FEBRUARY 5, 2024** -- Mabra Law's Ronnie Mabra and Peak Wooten McDaniel & Colwell LLP's Brandon Peak and Chris McDaniel settled a disputed liability wrongful death case for a record \$32.5 million. The case centers on an early-morning tractor-trailer wreck that claimed the life of a young husband, father of four, and U.S. Army veteran. Gwinnett County State Court Judge Ronda S. Colvin presided over the case.

Before sunrise on December 7, 2021, Christopher Crump was driving to work in Camilla, Georgia. At the same time, the driver of a tractor-trailer who was leaving a food processing plant failed to yield while turning left and caused a deadly underride collision that killed Mr. Crump. The plaintiff's team established during discovery that the tractor, owned by G.R.E.L. Trucking LLC (defendant), had not undergone a required annual inspection in almost two years. Further, it was being operated with a defective "pigtail," a coiled hose that supplies power from the tractor to the trailer. The pigtail's wiring was exposed and in such poor condition that it failed to provide power to the trailer. As a result, none of the trailer's lights worked when the collision occurred.

The plaintiff's team also proved that the retroreflective tape on the side of the trailer, which was owned by a food processing company, was damaged, worn and peeling, and failed to comply with Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations' requirements. The combination rendered the tractor-trailer a highly dangerous, invisible roadway hazard. Because Crump could not see the tractor-trailer, he was unable to avoid it, setting in motion the horrific collision that took his life.

The defense vigorously contested liability throughout the case, blaming the decedent for failing to see and avoid the tractor-trailer. Defendants' motions for summary judgment and other pre-trial motions were denied. The case settled before trial following a court-ordered mediation.

"When we were hired by Mr. Crump's widow, our client had two goals: to make sure that the defendants enact safety measures to prevent this from happening again and to take care of the couple's children following their dad's death. We are proud to have accomplished both of those goals," said Peak Wooten partner Brandon Peak, who served as lead counsel in the case.

“This was an important case for an incredibly courageous client,” said Peak’s partner Chris McDaniel. Increasingly, he said, companies and carriers attempt to avoid liability by subcontracting loads to smaller carriers. “Many times, these smaller carriers have little-to-no insurance or established procedures that will ensure they are hiring safe drivers and using safe equipment. This exposes members of the public to extreme and unknown dangers as they are going about their daily lives.”

Mabra Law founder and plaintiff’s co-counsel Ronnie Mabra noted the team’s appreciation for the work, attention and care that Judge Colvin and her judicial staff provided prior to the settlement. “While our team welcomed the opportunity to try this case, we are told this is the largest pre-trial settlement for a single wrongful death case in Georgia history. We are proud to have secured this result for our client and her children. We uncovered some bad conduct in this case and were able to put a stop to it so other families won’t have to go through what the Crump family has been through.”

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